

The Hartley Handbells

Compiled by
Lionel Hartley



HANDBELL HUMOUR

101+ Handbell Jokes

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The Hartley Handbells

<www.geocities.com/hartleyhandbells>



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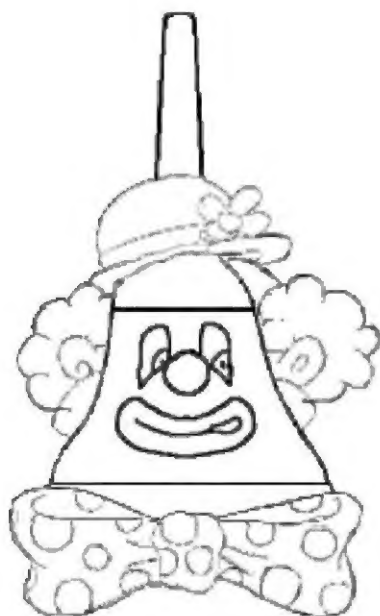
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*"I assume we get time-and-a-half
for working on Sundays."*

(Source: <www.joe-ks.com>)

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Foreword

A selection of handbell funnies to ring out smile. Useful for ice-breakers or to simply while away the time (preferably not during rehearsals!). Many of these items poke fun at handbell ringers, but it is hazardous to laugh at others unless we can laugh at ourselves first.

Now, you may ask, Why so many (over 100) handbell jokes in one place?

I guess the answer is summed up in the story that is told of a visiting minister who had a few handbell jokes and anecdotes ‘up his sleeve’ to introduce the handbell ensemble. The group would be playing to a different audience each day. The media were there and the visiting minister didn’t want them printing his anecdotes, as he couldn’t use them again the next day. So in order to use the same jokes again, he requested that the reporters omit them from any accounts they might turn in to their newspapers. A novice reporter, in commenting on the programme, ended his piece with the following, “... and the minister introduced the group with a number of stories that cannot be printed here.”

This book may prevent that happening to you. May you have a joke to save for another day.

— Lionel Hartley (Compiler of some sections, the writer of others and taking the blame for editing them all.)

Handbell Ha Ha's

We keep our handbell jokes short...
So that the ringers can understand them.

Someone once said, " A real leader faces the music, even when he doesn't like the tune."
Well, I hope there's a lot of leaders in the audience today!

Handbell music is better than it sounds.
*(Styled after Mark Twain [1835-1910] who said,
"Wagner's music is better than it sounds.")*

How can you tell if a bellringer is out of tune?
The bell is moving.

"Wake up" said the conductor, "your music is Pericles!"
(This joke will be best understood by those who know William Shakespeare's words from Pericles: "But hark, what music? ... The music of the spheres ... Most heavenly music! It nips me into listening, and thick slumber Hangs upon mine eyes. —)

The bells are ringing...
The bells are ringing...
The bells are ringing wet!

Once upon a time there were two handbell ringers who played in tune.
Well, don't look at me like that, it COULD happen!

A noted comedian was recently flying overseas. He decided to strike up a conversation with his seatmate.
"I've got a great handbell joke. Would you like to hear it?"
"I should let you know first that I am an handbell ringer".
"That's OK. I'll tell the joke really slowly!"

I can see why you prefer handbells to tower bells. As Benjamin Disraeli said, "Little things effect little minds".

The Speaking Clock:

Following a night out with a few friends, a man brought them back to show off his new flat.

After the grand tour, the visitors were rather surprised to see a large handbell taking pride of place in the lounge.

"What's that big bell for?" one of the guests asked.

"Why, that handbell is my Speaking Clock" the man replied. "It tells me the time!"

"How does it work?"

"I'll show you", the man said, giving the bell an ear-shattering ring.

Suddenly, a voice from the other side of the wall screamed, "For goodness sake, you idiot, it's twenty to two in the morning!"

"Doctor, I need psychiatric help! I keep thinking I'm a bell!"

"Take two aspirin and if you're not better in the morning give me a ring."

Advice for handbell ensemble conductors:

Never argue with an idiot.

They drag you down to their level then beat you with experience.

Advice for handbell ringers:

Just because you're paranoid it doesn't mean they're not out to get you.

What is the difference between a "Battery" and a Bellringer?

A battery has a positive side and is useful for something.

Never underestimate the power of stupid people in large groups

Don't feel bad about being a bell ringer...

Because everybody is somebody else's weirdo.

The handbells can be instruments of worship

For when they play we sense the Majesty of God

And when they stop we sense the Grace of God.

A handbell ringer with no hands joined our ensemble. He held the bell in his mouth and shook his head to make it ring. He looked rather frightening, but I reassured my young son by saying, "Look, I can't remember his name but he's quite 'armless and his face rings a bell!"

What is the dynamic range of a handbell?

Ringng or silent.

A musician one day came across an old lamp at a garage sale, took it home, polished it up, and out popped a genie.

"Thank you kind sir for releasing me from this old lamp. I regret to say that you have encountered a poor, less powerful genie, and I can only grant you one wish, but wish away" said the genie.

"Oh that's wonderful. I think I would really like to make a difference in the world with my one wish", said the musician. He thought for a moment and then reached for his atlas. "Here's a map the South Pacific. Could you make a five-lane motorway and bridge between New Zealand and Australia?"

The genie, a little caught off guard, said "Oh, well, ah... that's a little bit too much for even this old master to handle. I'm afraid you're going to have to make another wish."

"Well, okay," said the musician. "For my one wish, I would just once in my lifetime like to hear the handbells actually play in time."

The genie quickly thought for a moment and replied, "How many lanes did you say?"

A mother and child were walking through a cemetery, and passed by a headstone inscribed 'Here lies a good musician and a bellringer.'

The little child read the headstone, looked up at his mother, and asked 'Mommy, why did they bury two people in there?'

Why has the handbell come to be called a divine instrument?

Because although a human rings it, only God knows why

What's the difference between bellringers and terrorists?

Terrorists have sympathisers.

How do you make a handbell sound beautiful?

Sell it and buy a violin.

What's the definition of a dumbbell?

Someone who owns his own handbell.

How do you get two handbell ringers to play in perfect unison?

Shoot one.

What's the definition of a minor second?

Two handbells playing in perfect unison.

Bell ringers shouldn't take their art so seriously. No one else does.

What's the difference between an handbell and an onion?

No one cries when you chop up a handbell.

The Arabian Night's Entertainments (circa 1450) says, "To some people music is like food, to others like medicine; to others like a fan."

I'm too polite to say what your music is like to me!"

What's the difference between a handbell and a trampoline?

You take off your shoes when you jump on a trampoline.

Why don't bellringers play hide and seek?

Because no one will look for them.

Why did the chicken cross the road?

To get away from the handbell recital.

Why do bell ringers leave a handbell on the dashboard?

So they can park in the handicapped zones.

A bellringer, sick of all the handbell jokes, decides to change his instrument. After some thought, he decides on the accordion. So he goes to the music store and says to the owner, "I'd like to look at the accordions, please."

The owner gestures to a shelf in the corner and says "All our accordions are over there."

After browsing, the drummer says, "I think I'd like the big red one in the corner."

The store owner looks at him and says, "You're a handbell ringer, aren't you?"

The bellringer, crestfallen, says, "How did you know?"

The store owner says, "That 'big red accordion' is the radiator."

Variation: A bellringer, sick of all the handbell jokes, decides to change his instrument. After some thought, he decides on the violin. So he goes to a shop and says to the owner, "I'd like to buy a violin, please."

The store owner looks at him and says, "You're a handbell ringer, aren't you?"

The bellringer, crestfallen, says, "How did you know?"

The store owner replies, "Well, sir, this is a fish-and-chip shop."

"A handbell is a musical instrument the only thing worse than which is two or more "

Adapted from the Devil's Dictionary, by Ambrose Bierce

Why do bellringers smile when they play?

Because ignorance is bliss and what they don't know can't hurt them.

Two bellringers were standing on a sinking ship. "Help!" cried the first, "I can't swim!"

"Don't worry," said the other, "just fake it."

What is "perfect pitch"?

When you throw a handbell out the window without hitting the sill.

Ding, Dong, Dell

Listen to the bell

They really wreck the little tune

We used to like so well.

Ding, Dong, Dell

Promise not to yell

It's only for a little spell

And we can say farewell!

What do you call a handbell ringer with half a brain?

Gifted.

How do you make a chain saw sound like a handbell?

Add vibrato.

"Hey, buddy, how late do the bellringers play?"

"Oh, about a half a beat behind the accompaniment."

Reason given for ringing your bell half a beat behind the accompaniment:

"The sooner you fall behind, the more time you'll have to catch up."

Some bell ringers are only alive because murder is illegal.

Warning: Rehearsal dates on the calendar are closer than they appear.

A family without bellringers is like a neck without a pain.

Friend to bellringer: "When I heard you play, I had to remind myself that I'm only supposed to judge people on personality."

Bellringers are unique, just like everyone else.

Write the music notation idiot-proof and someone will make a better idiot

How do you get a bellringer to play softer?

Give him music to read.

If you took all the bellringers in the world and laid them end to end...
It would be a good idea.

A blind guy on a bar stool shouts to the bartender:

"Hey! Do you want to hear a handbell joke?"

The bar immediately becomes absolutely quiet. In a hushed voice, the guy next to him says, "Before you tell that joke, you should know something. The bartender is a bell ringer, the bouncer is too, and a bell-choir conductor with a black belt in karate. What's more, the guy sitting next to me is weight-lifter who plays our largest bells." He continues, "the fellow to your right is wrestler who also rings bells. Think about it seriously, Mister. You still want to tell that joke?"

The blind guy says: "Nah! Not if I'm gonna have to explain it five times."

That word *home* always sounds like poetry to me. It rings like a peal of bells...,
only more soft and sweet, and it chimes deeper into the ears of my heart.

— Charles Haddon Spurgeon,

cited in *Pearls from Many Seas* J. B. McClure, editor

If a person is ringing a bell in the forest and no conductor is there to hear him, is he still playing it wrong?

Why is it that 99% of bellringers give the rest a bad name?

Where's a bell's resonance?

Where the ringer's brain should be.

What do you call two bellringers at the bottom of the ocean?

A good start.

If you drop a handbell and a watermelon off a tall building, which will hit the ground first?

Who cares?

A music director reluctantly calls a booking agency to engage a handbell ringer.

"I'm sorry, he's dead," comes the reply.

The director calls back 25 times, always getting the same reply from the receptionist.

At last, she asks him why he keeps calling.

"I just like to hear you say it."

Top Ten Reasons to Join the Church Handbell Music Ministry:

- 10 You've been wanting to ring someone's chimes for years and the Handbell Ensemble is just the ticket.
- 9 You have a tendency to get egg on your clothes at Sunday breakfast and the choir robe will cover it up.
- 8 You heard that if you can count in time you can be in the handbell ensemble
And now you're wondering how you can smuggle a calculator and a clock in the sanctuary
7. Someone once said you are very musical, and after all, we know that mothers are totally unbiased.
6. You're dying to know what [name someone] is talking about during rehearsals!
5. You are used to hearing bells ring every day — when your alarm clock rings!
4. You have a certificate declaring you the "belle of the Ball".
3. You have tinnitus (ringing in the ears).
2. You once burped the entire national anthem in fifth grade and anybody who is that creative needs an outlet.
1. There is a tune in your heart just longing to be played.
God wrote it and it's all about how he loves you.
It's His favorite and it never ends!

- Adapted from the "Evangel," newsletter of the First Baptist Church, Columbus, MS.

We should consider listening to handbells a privilege.

D L Moody said, "We can stand affliction better than we can prosperity, for in prosperity we forget God."

A man walks into a bar and asks for a beer.

After drinking it, he takes out a portable tape player, listens for a few seconds and then asks for another beer.

After drinking that one, he listens to the cassette again and asks for another beer. This happens about another seven times before the bartender asks him, "Why do you keep listening to that cassette for a few seconds before asking for your next beer?"

The man replies, "I have a recording of the local handbell ensemble. When they sound good enough, I'll go home."

What's the definition of a real gentleman?

One who knows how to play the handbells, but doesn't.

Anything that is too stupid to be sung is played on the handbells.

Adapted from Voltaire's "Anything that is too stupid to be spoken is sung."

All bellringers are capable of bringing *joy* to people:

Some when they are playing, others when they stop.

A handbell ringer from New Zealand was hiking in the mountains, and he came upon a shepherd who was tending a large herd of sheep that were grazing in the meadow. The bellringer took a fancy to the sheep, and asked the shepherd: "If I can guess how many sheep you have, can I have one?"

The shepherd thought this was an odd request, but thought that there was little chance that the man would guess the exact number of sheep, so he said "Sure." The bellringer guessed "You have 287 sheep," to the shepherd's astonishment, since this was exactly how many sheep he had.

The bellringer got all excited and asked "Can I pick out my sheep now?" and the shepherd grudgingly gave his permission. The bellringer selected his sheep, bent over, and swung the sheep over his shoulders, to carry home with him.

The shepherd then got an idea and asked "If I guess what your occupation is, can I have my sheep back?" The bellringer was a bit surprised by this, but figured that it was unlikely that the shepherd would be able to guess his occupation, and went along with the deal. The shepherd then guessed "You're a handbell ringer, aren't you?"

The bellringer was very surprised and asked, "How did you know?"

The shepherd responded, "Put the dog down and we'll talk about it."

Learn from the mistakes of other bellringers.

You can't live long enough to make them all yourself.

Exasperated conductor to bell choir:

"God must love stupid people — He made so many of them."

I got a set of handbells for my wife...

The best trade I ever made.

How do you make a bellringer laugh on Saturday?

Tell him or her a joke on Wednesday.

Does your dog howl praise when you practice your bells?

Ann Landers warns, "Don't accept your dog's admiration as conclusive evidence that you are wonderful."

I wonder if Robert Orben was a handbell ringer, for he said,

"There are days when it takes all you've got just to keep up with the losers."

A man (call him Egbert) went on a safari in darkest Africa with a bunch of other people and some native guides. They travelled on foot, going deep into the jungle where they could hear the screeching of birds and howling of wild cats and other fierce wild animals.

After a few days of travel, Egbert came to notice that there was a constant drumming noise in the background. He asked the leader of the guides what the drumming was. He got no answer, just a stony silence. The drumming continued all day and all night for the next several days. In fact, as they travelled deeper into the jungle the drumming got even louder. Egbert tried again to find out what the drumming meant by asking the other native guides, but he still got no answer. Finally one morning, after days of marching to this drumming (which by now was sounding quite ominous), the drums suddenly stopped. The native guides screamed and ran into the jungle to hide in the undergrowth. The leader remained behind with his charges, but he was trembling with fear. Egbert asked, "What is wrong? Why have the drums stopped?"

The native guide replied "Very bad."

"What?" asked Egbert, who was expecting the worst.

The guide answered "When drum stops, very bad—next comes handbell solo!"

On a bus trip home from a bell-ringing marathon concert the bellringer overheard a conversation behind him.

One fellow said to his friend, "I've had enough of bell-ringing. I can't wait to get back to Dallas. There are only two bell ringing choirs there."

His buddy replied, "I can't wait to get back to Houston. There's only one 'peal' of ringers there."

Finally the bellringer turned and commented, "You both should go to hell! There aren't any bellringers there!"

Advice to handbell ringers from Muhammad Ali:

"If they can make penicillin out of moldy bread...

They can sure make something out of you." -

I sometimes think that Booker T. Washington was a typical out-of-tune handbell ringer, for he said, "Excellence is to do a common thing in an uncommon way."

A man goes to see the Rabbi.

"Rabbi, something terrible is happening and I have to talk to you about it."

The Rabbi asked, "What's wrong?"

The man replied, "My wife is poisoning me."

The Rabbi, very surprised by this, asks, "How can that be?"

The man then pleads, "I'm telling you, I'm certain she's poisoning me. What should I do?"

The Rabbi then offers, "Tell you what. Let me talk to her, I'll see what I can find out and I'll let you know."

A week later the Rabbi calls the man and says, "Well, I spoke to your wife. I caught up with her when she was practicing her handbells. Do you want my advice?"

The man said, "Yes."

The Rabbi replied, "Well, she makes such a racket that I advise you to take the poison!"

Another version: Becky was on her deathbed. Her husband, Jake, was maintaining a steady vigil by her side. As he held her fragile hand, his warm tears ran silently down his face, splashed onto her face, and roused her from her slumber. She looked up and her pale lips began to move slightly. "My darling Jake," she whispered. "Hush, my love," he said. "Go back to sleep. Shhh. Don't talk." But she was insistent. "Jake," she said in her tired voice. "I have to talk. I have something I must confess to you." "There's nothing to confess," replied the weeping Jake. "It's all right. Everything's all right, go to sleep now." "No, no. I must die in peace, Jake. I joined the handbell ringers even though you pleaded with me not to." Jake mustered a pained smile and stroked her hand. "Hush now Becky, don't torment yourself. I know all about it," he said. "Why do you think I poisoned you?"

When Egbert learned that he was being dismissed from the handbell ensemble, he went to see the Church Minister. "Since I've been with the ensemble for so long," he said, "I think I deserve at least a letter of recommendation."

The Minister agreed and said he'd have the letter that next day. The following morning, Egbert found the letter in his mailbox.

It read, "Egbert Smithson rang in our handbell ensemble for five years. When he left us, we were very satisfied."

A music fan was sitting in back row at a handbell recital, barely able to see the ringers. He noticed a vacant seat about 3 rows from the front. It was still vacant when the music started, so between items he went down and asked the man seated next to it if anyone was sitting there. The man said, "No, have a seat." A few minutes later he asked the man if he knew whose seat this was and why he or she was not here at such an fantastic event. The man said that it was to have been his wife's seat but that she had passed away. Feeling sorry for the nice man, the fan asked if he didn't have a friend or family member that he could have offered the seat to instead of just leaving it vacant. The man said "No, they're all at the funeral."

Handbell Ringer's Cognitive Training Exercise:

1. Say HANDBELL before each word:

_____ Handbells
_____ About
_____ Talking
_____ Idiot
_____ Stupid
_____ This
_____ Got
_____ I
_____ Long
_____ How
_____ See

When the ringer made a clanger and was told to get the "L" out of it he went "BUZZ" (BELL - LL = BE)



3. Say HANDBELL after each word:

Handbells _____
About _____
Talking _____
Idiot _____
Stupid _____
This _____
Got _____
I _____
Long _____
How _____
See _____

Do you think it might be significant that you only hear this ringing in your ears when you're at church?



You're doing well. Keep going — there is a purpose to this exercise.

4. Now say HANDBELL before and after each word:

_____ Handbells _____
_____ About _____
_____ Talking _____
_____ Idiot _____
_____ Stupid _____
_____ This _____
_____ Got _____
_____ I _____
_____ Long _____
_____ How _____
_____ See _____



Tinnitus
(From the Latin *tinnire*
tinnit-ring or tinkle)

5. Start at the bottom of this next list and read the words upwards:

Handbells!

About

Talking

Idiot

Stupid

This

Got

I

Long

How

See

During a hectic rehearsal of off-the-table handbell ringing, one of the bells toppled and fell on the floor.

Before anyone had a chance to pick it up, the conductor, who had a reputation for being stern, demanded angrily, "Why is that bell on the floor?"

Without hesitation the ringer replied, "Gravity, sir."

Bell *ringing* should be *admiring*, *adoring*, *awe-inspiring*, *endearing*, *reassuring*, *stirring*, and a *wellspring*, but makes for *cringing* as it is often *bewildering*, *boring*, *uncaring*, *daring*, *ear-shattering*, *hammering*, *overbearing*, *infringing*, *thundering*, *ear-battering*, *roaring*, *scaring*, *unsparing*, *uninspiring*, *despairing*, *hair-tearing*, *untiring*, *unwavering*, *unflattering*, and *suffering*!

When Burt the Bellringer was on holidays his brother Bernie took his place in the bell choir. However on his first day at practice Bernie suffered a heart attack and died. None of the choir knew him very well and therefore described him to the Press as "... a dead ringer for his brother!"

Handbell Ensemble Proficiency Test

In order to measure your level of proficiency as a handbell ensemble member, the following test has been carefully developed by experts. Read and reflect on each situation and then select the option that will enhance the quality of the performance.

1. You are entering the choir loft on Sunday morning and suddenly trip and fall down. You should:
 - a. Assume a kneeling position and break into fervent prayer.
 - b. Pretend that you've had a heart attack.
 - c. Crawl into the nearest chair.
 - d. Begin speaking in tongues.

2. You count incorrectly. As a result you ring out a high "C" one measure too soon. You should:
 - a. Look and angrily at the other ringers as if it their fault.
 - b. Look triumphant and continue ringing.
 - c. Stop the sound abruptly in mid dongle but keep bell moving.
 - d. Sink to the floor in shame.

3. After all those long hard rehearsals, you show up twenty minutes late for the Christmas musical. You should:
 - a. Climb into the back row of the choir stalls from the baptistry.
 - b. Enter pretending to be a soundman checking cables and then suddenly slip yourself into the choir.
 - c. Turn the lights out in the church and slip into the choir stalls during the black-out.
 - d. Run in shouting, "it's a boy, It's a boy" (the Virgin Mary was pregnant, remember!)

4. While ringing, you discover you have only one page of a two-page hymn. You should:
 - a. Hum for your life as loud as you can.
 - b. Gently rock the bells as though you are playing but don't make any noise
 - c. Try to get another hymnal out of the choir rack with your feet.
 - d. play the first page over again.

5. Inevitably that dreaded big sneeze occurs toward the end of the ensemble special. You should:
 - a. As you sneeze, stomp on your neighbour's foot to create a diversion.
 - b. Try to make it harmonise.
 - c. Sneeze into the hair of the choir member nearest you to muffle the noise.
 - d. Sink to the floor in shame.

Count the number of A's, B's, C's, and D's you checked and find your proficiency rating below:

- 4 or more A's...there is nothing more you need to know to be a first rate handbell ensemble member.
- 4 or more B's...your handbell reflexes are fully developed and you should do well in ensemble.
- 4 or more C's...your ensemble experience is spotty but your team spirit is on target. You will be an asset to most any handbell ensemble.
- 4 or more D's...it is recommended you take up soccer instead or perhaps group therapy counselling.

Glossary:

A bell is a hollow thing that makes a loud ringing sound when struck or shaken
whereas a bell ringer is a hollow thing that makes a loud ringing sound when struck or shaken

Bellringer: a person with delusions of adequacy

Marathon Ringer: Someone with the wisdom of youth, and the energy of old age

A mute bellringer is called a humdinger and one that can talk is called a ding-a-ling

A tin bell is called a tinkle and is played by tinklings (Miniature ringers)

To make a mistake in bell ringing is referred to as a clanger

The noise from a Vietnamese bell is "dong"
(The basic unit of money in Vietnam is the dong.)

The noise from a smelly bell is "pong" The noise from a camel's bell is "dung"

A 'be' is the bell used by the angel who said no "L" (Noel).

A clapper is the only part of a bell that is self-applauding

Dilbert's Rule: Bell ringers can only please one person per day.
Today is not your day. Tomorrow is not looking good either

Belldinger: Someone who practices random acts of intelligence
and senseless acts of self-control

Tocsins's Three Tonal T's: On time, In Time, and In Tune!

Bell ring: Periphrasis circumbendibus pleonastically riposting auditoria.

"This must be music," said he, "of the spears,
For I'm curst* if each note of it doesn't run through one!"
—Thomas Moore (1779-1852) - The Fudge Family, 1818
* sic *(Obviously thinking about handbells when he wrote it!)*